



The Wildlife Management Institute 68th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

March 26-29, 2003
Winston Salem, North Carolina



BIOSKETCH FOR THE 2003 NATIONAL 4-H WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES ADULT VOLUNTEER WINNERS

IOWA



Dan Cohen, of Hazelton, Iowa, is the Director of the Buchanan County Conservation Board and has been a 4-H Volunteer Leader for 17 years.

In the summer of 1985 Dan was given the opportunity to help lead a 4-H wilderness trip into the Boundary Waters

Canoe Area Wilderness of Northern Minnesota. At the time he was a senior at Iowa State University and employed as a naturalist intern. The wilderness adventure impressed him on many levels. Although Dan had experienced wilderness before, the 4-H trip provided him a unique opportunity to share the wilderness he loved and valued with young people who proved to be equally impressed with the experience. He was left with a revelation about how the 4-H wilderness programs could be an integral part of effective environmental education.

Dan has spent the last 17 years employed in the natural resources field in Iowa. Until last year, when he became the Buchanan County Conservation Board Executive Director, he was a naturalist engaged in environmental education. He saw that wilderness education necessarily encompasses an understanding of the living and physical features of a natural community; sensitivity to the environment and environmental impacts; ethical considerations; development of good judgement; and the ability to improvise and solve problems. Dan says the

wilderness experience also provides a special personal growth that results from a sense of accomplishment, connectedness, and hard work. He has found through his adult leadership in 4-H, that a single week in the wilderness can provide these educational needs with a greater impact than a hundred programming days to classroom students.

Recognizing the impact potential of wilderness experiences, Dan has sought to expand on ways to make these experiences more accessible to youth. Through a cooperative effort between the county 4-H Extension Office and county Conservation Board Office, a wilderness Outdoor Adventure Program (OAP) was established in a manner that compliments the state 4-H wilderness program.

Other 4-H activities Dan has been involved with are co-facilitating Adult Volunteer Wilderness Leadership Training; he designed and coordinates the county Outdoors Adventures Program (A program for ages 11 - 18); he presents sessions related to the 4-H Program's wilderness leadership activities at state and national conferences, and he has authored more than 20 booklets on topics related to Iowa natural history.

In addition to his wilderness volunteer work, Dan says he has had the pleasure to work with other facets of 4-H Extension, both at the state and county levels, and with some of the most talented and professional people who impact natural resources in Iowa. He intends to continue to serve as a volunteer leader with 4-H Extension programs, and facilitate partnerships between 4-H and natural resource professionals in Iowa.